



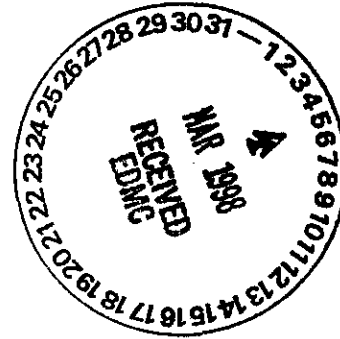
# **U.S. Department of Energy**

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FEB 13 1998



Mr. J. R. Wilkinson  
Confederated Tribes  
of the Umatilla Indian Reservation  
P.O. Box 638  
Pendleton, Oregon 97801

Dear Mr. Wilkinson:

## CLARIFICATION OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (DOE), RICHLAND OPERATIONS OFFICE'S (RL), PERSPECTIVE ON ISSUES RELATED TO THE COLUMBIA RIVER COMPREHENSIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT (CRCIA)

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the CRCIA team for the hard work put forth in the scoping study and the development of the requirements section in the "Screening Assessment and Requirements for a Comprehensive Impact Assessment," (DOE-RL-96-16). Protecting the Columbia River is of paramount importance to DOE and we share a common goal to maintain this valuable regional resource. The CRCIA Team's effort has provided an important product that will help RL in this endeavor.

I recognize there are important issues associated with the performance of additional steps, yet to be performed, to complete a cumulative impact assessment of the Columbia River. At the heart of these issues are: (1) whether or not DOE plans to complete a comprehensive impact assessment; (2) the proposed management approach to complete a cumulative impact assessment; (3) how and if the requirements developed by the team will be used in the performance of such an assessment; and (4) how the Tribes as well as other external interested stakeholders would be able to participate in the conduct of such an assessment. RL would like to clarify its perspective on these issues:

I appreciate the value of the work performed by the CRCIA Team on both the screening assessment and the requirements document as a foundation for proceeding with a cumulative impact assessment.

- I commit to continued discussions with interested parties concerning the remaining open issues, and additionally, the most effective processes for stakeholder involvement and technical peer review for the impact assessment and related Hanford activities.
- RL, working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Washington Department of Ecology, intends to explore various management approaches to completing a cumulative impact assessment with appropriate independent oversight.

Mr. J. R. Wilkinson

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In closing, RL would like to once again thank each team member for their efforts. Please distribute this correspondence throughout your organizations to make sure those who have been involved are aware of RL's appreciation.

If you want to discuss this correspondence further or require additional information, please contact Mr. Bryan L. Foley at (509) 376-7087.

Sincerely,



Linda K. Bauer, Assistant Manager  
for Environmental Restoration

GWP:BLF

cc: S. Harris, CTUIR  
A. Minthorn, CTUIR  
J. Van Pelt, CTUIR